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Edited by

ALBERT MOREY STURTEVANT
MANAGING EDITOR

WALTER JOHNSON
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AND
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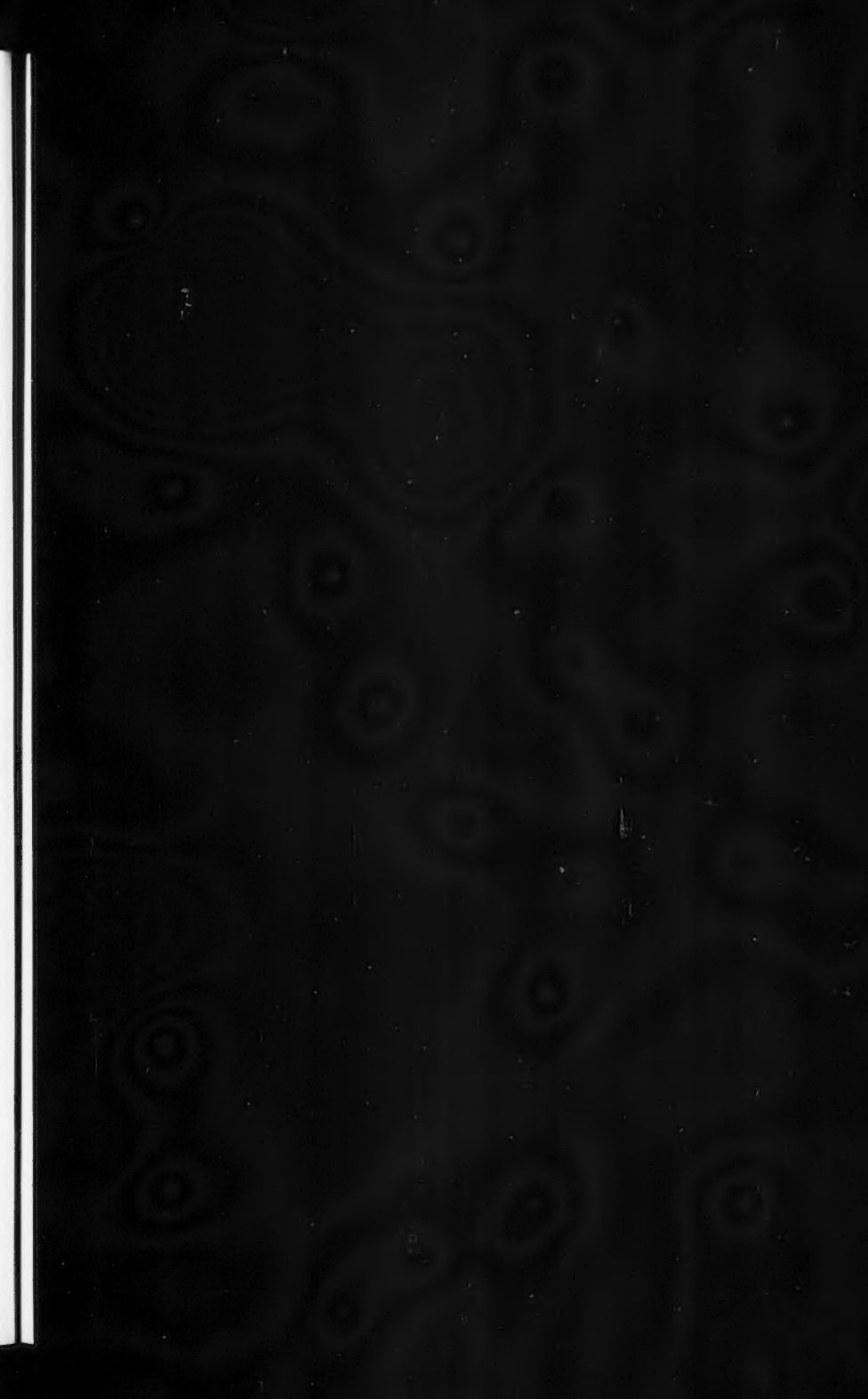
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INACCURACIES IN LONGFELLOW'S TRANSLATION OF TEGNÉR'S "NATTVARDBARNEN"

JOHN LEIGHLY

Berkeley, California

... det nordiske Digterværk kommer
jo ikke (som Statuen eller Maleriet)
till Udlandet i uforvansket Skikkelse.

Georg Brandes, *Esaias Tegnér*.

BRANDES'S dictum that Scandinavian poetry reaches the world outside the North only in a distorted form may not be so completely true today as it was when he penned it, seventy years ago; yet by far the greater number of non-Scandinavians must still, as then, read Scandinavian poetry, as Brandes continues, "in translation; that is, bereft of its skin." A heavier responsibility therefore rests on translators from the Scandinavian languages than on the intermediaries between more widely known tongues. Longfellow's *Children of the Lord's Supper* has for over a century been the best-known specimen of Scandinavian poetry rendered by an American poet into English verse. It occupies a central position in Swedish-American literary relations; whatever its defects as a poem, it still deserves attention, even repeated attention.

Andrew Hilén has provided a documented account of the circumstances under which this translation of Tegnér's *Nattvardsbarnen* was made.¹ Longfellow had misgivings about it before it was published, and Tegnér was dissatisfied with it after its publication. The reservations with which both the author and the translator viewed Longfellow's version seem to have been

¹ *Longfellow and Scandinavia* (Yale Studies in English, Vol. 17, New Haven, 1947), pp. 53-59.

founded exclusively on its prosody. Tegnér's comments concerning it² are couched in general terms and give no clue as to what he found objectionable. His failure to state his objections in detail is regrettable, especially since he had earlier praised Longfellow's hexameters as "klanderlösa."³ Now, the only hexameters employed by the American poet that Tegnér could have read when he bestowed this praise were contained in the passage from the third canto of *Frithiofs saga* which Longfellow had translated for his well-known article published in 1837.⁴ Today it is difficult to see any superiority in the prosody of this extract over that of *The Children of the Lord's Supper*, when allowance is made for the greater difficulty the translator encounters in a rather long poem, in which he has to tackle the harder passages along with the easier ones, than in a selected fragment.

Opinions concerning prosody have changed so greatly in the last century that whatever misgivings Longfellow had about the hexameters of his translation and whatever faults Tegnér found in them have today only a limited, historical significance. My purpose here is to examine some linguistic qualities of Longfellow's translation; and specifically, to question his ability to read Swedish with the ease and thorough understanding that are to be expected of a translator. When his biographers and critics have not overtly asserted that Longfellow had mastered the Swedish language, they seem to have taken it for granted. No commentator seems to have read *The Children of the Lord's Supper* with sufficient attention to the accuracy with which Longfellow rendered Tegnér's Swedish poem into English. A careful parallel reading of the translation and the Swedish original does disclose, in fact, a number of errors that could hardly have arisen except from an imperfect understanding, on Longfellow's part, of the original.

"Literal, Perhaps to a Fault"

Longfellow set forth in his article of 1837,⁵ in the form of a

² Cf. the letter to C. G. von Brinkman, dated May 11, 1843. *Esaias Tegnér, Samlade skrifter* . . . utgifven af Ewert Wrangel och Fredrik Böök, Vol. 9 (Stockholm, 1925), p. 541. Cited by Hilén, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

³ "Om meter och rim," *ibid.*, p. 309.

⁴ "Frithiof's Saga," *North American Review*, Vol. 45 (1837), pp. 149-185.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

quotation from Goethe, his "maxim of translation"; namely, "that we transport ourselves over to [the author], and adopt his situation, his mode of speaking, his peculiarities." And in the Preface to *Ballads and Other Poems*, in which volume *The Children of the Lord's Supper* was first published, he advised the reader that "the translation is literal, perhaps to a fault." The modern reader cannot surmise what "fault" Longfellow saw in literalness; the fault that can be recognized is an occasional failure on the part of the poet, through use of the handiest dictionary equivalent instead of a better chosen but less immediately available word, to convey Tegnér's meaning. That is not a fault of literalness, but of linguistic knowledge and literary skill. In view of the principle Longfellow professed, discrepancies in meaning between the original and the translation may justifiably be looked upon as unintentional. Usually, but not always, careful reading enables one to distinguish between departures from the original made to preserve the meter and those that arose from a misunderstanding of Tegnér's Swedish.⁶

The Children of the Lord's Supper exhibits in many places Longfellow's use, where the meter permitted, of an English word cognate but not quite synonymous with Tegnér's Swedish word instead of the word customarily used in English. Such a choice of words often produces an archaic effect, which the poet evidently welcomed; on the other hand, it generally conveys a shade of meaning that deviates more or less from that conveyed by the Swedish word. The following list gives some examples:

Line no.	Tegnér	Longfellow	Common Usage
2	<i>sken</i> (noun)	sheen	light, (sun)shine
4, 286	<i>glänste</i>	glanced	glowed
34	<i>blänkte</i>	blinked	gleamed
57	<i>glans</i>	glance	luster
85	<i>-lära</i>	lore	doctrine
125	<i>ock</i>	eke	also
296, 315, 316	<i>tecken</i>	token	symbol
328	<i>dom(en)</i>	doom	judgment
338	<i>klarare</i>	clearer	brighter

⁶ The Swedish text of *Nattvardsbarnen* which I have used for the citations that follow is the one in Tegnér's *Samlade skrifter*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 108-120. For Longfellow's text I have used the version of *The Children of the Lord's Supper* in *The Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*. Illustrated, Vol. 1 (Boston, 1879), pp. 48-57.

In scarcely any of these examples would a translator who aimed at the immediate communication of sense be likely to use the cognate words. Yet Longfellow is not always to be reproached for using them. He conveyed the meaning of the original, albeit somewhat obliquely.

Sometimes, however, his use of the cognate word as a literal translation, instead of the idiomatic English expression, obscures the sense. Thus in line 35,

och i stället för ljus pingstliljor i piporna suto,

Longfellow translated *ljus* as "lights," whereas "candles" would have conveyed the meaning more accurately. And in the same line he translated *pingstliljor* as "lilies of Pentecost," where "narcissus" would have meant more to his English-speaking readers. Here he could not have identified *pingstliljor* with any flowers familiar to him or his prospective readers.

In line 60, Tegnér described the pastor's preliminary greeting to his congregation by saying that he *vinkade* *helsning och frid*, which Longfellow translated as "Nodding all hail and peace." "All hail," applied to this half-perfunctory acknowledgment of the congregation's rising to its feet when the pastor appeared, is certainly too high-flown. Longfellow presumably contemplated the use of the word "greeting" as a translation of *helsning*; but after he had substituted the participle "nodding" for Tegnér's finite verb *vinkade*, euphony forbade him to use a second word ending in "-ing" after "nodding." Here he failed in poetic invention, resorting to a defective equivalent for Tegnér's words.

Longfellow's translation of *saliga*, line 195, by too immediate an equivalent made a moving passage in the pastor's sermon downright silly; for Tegnér's

Ej fader, ej moder
älskade eder som Gud, ty att I må saliga varda
gaf han sin endaste son,

Longfellow wrote:

Not father, nor mother
Loved you, as God has loved you; for 't was that you may be happy
Gave He his only Son.

Earlier in the translation Longfellow showed that he knew the theological meaning of *salig*, since he translated *salighetslära* in line 84 as "lore of salvation"; and *salige* in line 131, in a paraphrase of one of the Beatitudes, as "blest." Perhaps it is such a slip as this in line 195 that Hilén excuses on the ground that Longfellow was unfamiliar with theological language;⁷ but it is hard to believe that the poet did not know the corresponding English passage from the Gospel of St. John which Tegnér was paraphrasing.⁸

In lines 279-280:

Knäböjd läste han då den heliga bönen, och sakta
läste de unga med . . .

Longfellow translated *läste* by its most immediate English equivalent, "read," and certainly with loss of accuracy:

Kneeling he read then the prayers of the consecration, and softly
With him the children read . . .

In this context, the English verb "read" implies the utterance of words that are before the eyes of the reader in written or printed form. Here *den heliga bönen* was probably no more than the *Fader vår*, which all the participants in the ceremony knew by heart and "repeated" together.

The passages cited may exemplify Longfellow's confessedly too literal translation; his poetic sensitiveness, however, should have enabled him to avoid such glancing blows, if he had read the original with enough ease to permit him to focus his attention on the technical problems of versification.

"That Inexorable Hexameter"

It would not be profitable to pick out from Longfellow's poem the many passages in which he changed the grammatical structure in order to fit English words to "that inexorable hexameter," as he called the meter of *Nattvardsbarnen* in the Preface to *Ballads and Other Poems*, but nevertheless retained the essen-

⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.

⁸ Joh. III, 16: "Ty så älskade Gud världen, att han utgav sin enfödde Son, på det att var och en som tror på honom skall icke förgås, utan hava evigt liv."

tial concepts expressed by Tegnér's words. There is a gradation of distortion in the translation of poetry, and no two critics would draw the same line between what is permissible and what is reprehensible. The passage in line 256:

Död är befrielsen blott, är förbarmandet stumt,

for example, is a difficult one to put into English. Longfellow's interpretation,

Death is only release, and in mercy is mute,

lacks the weight of Tegnér's "compassion speechless" (the meaning intended requires that the modifier follow the noun in both the Swedish and English), but it is not to be rejected. It would be unjust to hold Longfellow too strictly to a maxim that forbids any sacrifice of meaning to prosody. The "inexorable hexameter"—indeed, any strict verse form—exact its due toll. Certain passages, however, fall so far short of reproducing Tegnér's meaning as to deserve reproach.

In line 90 Tegnér described the appearance of the pastor when, after catechizing the children, he stepped before the altar and stood there *hög som en Herrans profet*. Longfellow characterized the venerable man's appearance as "Like the Lord's prophet sublime," missing at this juncture (*alltså syntes det mig*, line 89) the effect which the change in the pastor's manner had produced upon his apparent stature. Here a literal translation of *hög*, "tall," would have been better than Longfellow's figurative interpretation of the word.

It was perhaps difficulty with the meter that led him to change Tegnér's reference to

den som

hängde på intet sitt murarelod då han murade världen

(lines 177-178) by ignoring the "plummet" in his translation:

Him who

Hung his masonry pendent on naught, when the world he created,

thus weakening a powerful line.

It is difficult to surmise the reason for Longfellow's changing the sense of Tegnér's

redligt, så långt jag förstod af ditt ord,

line 273, to

Faithful, so far as I know, of thy word.

The meaning of "faithful . . . of thy word" is not clear, but it is certainly different from what Tegnér intended. The translator may have understood the passage, but may have been unable to express its meaning in metrical form.

Lines 136-139 of the translation contain a misinterpretation of the Swedish idiom. Tegnér wrote them thus:

Ack! då I vandren i dag ur barndomens heliga fristad
ned och allt djupare ned i årens kyliga dalar,
o! hur kommen I snart, för snart, att längta tillbaka
upp till dess kullar igen . . .

They became, under Longfellow's pen:

Oh, as ye wander this day from childhood's sacred asylum
Downward, and ever downward, and deeper in Age's chill valley,
Oh, how soon will ye come,—too soon!—and long to turn backward
Up to its hilltops again . . .

In the third line of the passage, *kommen* is connected grammatically with *att längta tillbaka*. There is a literal English equivalent (*come to*) of *komma att*, but it expresses progressive approach toward the state defined by the principal verb rather than the simple futurity of the Swedish expression. Longfellow must have had this use of "come to" in mind, and may have first formulated some such translation as this:

Oh, how soon will ye come,—too soon!—to long to turn backward.

He then evidently changed the wording of the sentence in order to avoid the repetition of "to" following "too" in the preceding foot. But in achieving such euphony as the substitution of "and" for "to" imparts to the line, he deprived "come" of all grammatical connection with the rest of the sentence; the sequence "come . . . and long" is, in this context, meaningless.

Outright Mistakes

Some of the imperfections enumerated above are merely the consequence of Longfellow's inability to devise an appropriate metrical expression of Tegnér's thought; none of them convicts

him of a charge more serious than a lack of ease with Tegnér's language, a lack that hampered his own free poetic invention. But *The Children of the Lord's Supper* also contains passages that betray grammatical misconceptions on the part of the poet, evident failures to interpret Tegnér's Swedish correctly. Line 148 exhibits a bad blunder:

Oskuld, älskade barn, är en gäst från sällare verldar.

The translation is:

Innocence, child beloved, is a guest from the world of the blessed.

Here Longfellow mistook *barn* for a singular noun in apposition with *osku'd*, whereas it obviously represents a plural vocative addressed to the children being confirmed. The plural form, "children," would fit the meter better than does the singular, as it does in line 263 (*I älskade barn*) and line 309 (*älskade barn*), where Longfellow recognized the expression as a vocative, and translated it as "ye children beloved."

In most of the pastor's homily, he addresses his young hearers in the plural. But in lines 204–207 Tegnér shifted the discourse temporarily into the singular imperative:

Derför, du menniskobarn, du älska förbarmande Fadren,
vilj hvad den helige vill, och af kärlek men icke af fruktan:
fruktan är slafvarnas dygd, men det älskande hjertat är villigt,
var fullkommen för Gud, fullkommen är kärleken ensam.

Longfellow translated:

Therefore, child of mortality, love thou the merciful Father;
Wish what the Holy One wishes, and not from fear, but affection;
Fear is the virtue of slaves, but the heart that loveth is willing;
Perfect was before God, and perfect is Love, and Love only.

When the grammatical tangle of the last of the four translated lines is combed out, it becomes evident that Longfellow mistook the imperative singular *var* for the imperfect singular and attached it to "Love" (*kärleken*) instead of to "child of mortality" (*menniskobarn*), to which it belongs, together with the earlier imperatives, "love" (*älska*) and "wish" (*vilj*). Tegnér was again paraphrasing a passage from the New Testament, from the

Sermon on the Mount,⁹ which Longfellow evidently did not recognize. His failure to recognize the form of the Swedish verb is a much more serious blunder.

A final example: lines 302-304 read, as Tegnér wrote them:

Se, tillbaka så långt som det gamla minnet, och framåt
långt som det flygande hopp kan nå på tröttade vingar,
synd och försoning alltjemt gå menniskolifvet igenom.

Longfellow made these lines into:

See! behind me, as far as the old man remembers, and forward,
Far as Hope in her flight can reach with her wearied pinions,
Sin and Atonement incessant go through the lifetime of mortals.

He thus completely misunderstood *det gamla minnet* 'ancient remembrance, or tradition,' which surveys the past as hope does the future. It would appear that *det gamla minnet* is sufficiently marked by signs of the neuter gender to prevent anyone who has even a moderate knowledge of Swedish from thinking that the pastor was referring to himself. The translation furnishes no clue as to the manner in which Longfellow misconstrued the syntax of the sentence.

It is obviously not always easy to discriminate, in *The Children of the Lord's Supper*, between Longfellow's faults of poetic invention and his faults of linguistic understanding. The latter, which are inexcusable, inevitably grade into the former, for the writing of verse is also a linguistic exercise, closely akin to translation. As a poetic interpretation, Longfellow's translation of *Nattvardsbarnen* exhibits a marked flattening of effects, which are far more powerful in the original than in the translation. One needs to go no farther into the poem than the first sentence to find an example of such flattening:

Pingst, hänryckningens dag, var inne.

By writing the first foot as a trochee, Tegnér struck a strong initial note. His second word recalls the ecstasy of the original Pentecost, but the remainder of the sentence, punctuated by

⁹ Matt. v, 48: "Varen I alltså fullkomliga, såsom eder himmelske Fader är fullkomlig."

the caesura after *dag*, quickly focuses attention on the anniversary that is at hand. The assonance of *-ing-* in the first two words and *in-* in the fifth ties the sentence into a compact unit. Little of its strength survives in Longfellow's translation:

Pentecost, day of rejoicing, had come.

Most of the flattening is unavoidable, since any possible equivalent of *pingst* in English ("Whitsuntide" is the nearest) is weaker than the Swedish word. Moreover, the holiday has no emotional associations whatever for most Americans.

Adverse criticism of the more or less inevitable lack of rhetorical contrast in a translation of poetry is mainly esthetic, only in part linguistic; it is the same type of criticism that E. C. Stedman directed against Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia*: "The three divisions seem leveled, so to speak, to the grade of the Purgatorio, midway between the zenith and nadir of Dante's song."¹⁰ But beyond this unavoidable and pardonable leveling, Longfellow's knowledge of Swedish was plainly more deficient than critics have realized; his most ambitious metrical translation from a Scandinavian language suffers from and betrays this deficiency. His opportunity for learning the Swedish language during the brief sojourn in Sweden in the summer of 1835 was scanty enough, in all conscience; and he evidently did not greatly amplify the knowledge he gained by personal contact with it through study after he returned to America. It is no wonder that his manuscript of *The Children of the Lord's Supper* is "covered with corrections."¹¹ When he wrote it, he was wrestling with an even more fundamental difficulty than that involved in the composition of hexameters in English.

¹⁰ Stedman, Edmund Clarence, *Poets of America* (Boston and New York, 1885), p. 211.

¹¹ Cf. Hilén, *op. cit.*, p. 54, footnote 1.

THE DOLLZHELLIR EPISODE IN THE ORKNEYINGA SAGA

PAUL SCHACH

North Central College

CHAPTER 61 of the *Orkneyinga saga* bears the title "Kali fór i Dollzhelli" in the *Flateyjarbók* and seems to have the heading "Fra Dollsh[elli]" in MS. 325; yet only one tenth of the chapter deals with Kali's adventures in the Dollzhellir, the remainder being devoted to the completely unrelated quarrel between two servants regarding the merits of their masters. Even more noteworthy than the inappropriate chapter heading are several other features—such as the vague description of the scene, the sketchy narrative, several contradictory statements, and the use of certain conventional motifs—none of which, to my knowledge, has been commented on in print. The following translation of the passage is based on MS. 325, with a few variant readings from the *Flateyjarbók* and MS. 702, as found in Nordan's edition of the saga:¹

It happened one summer when Kali had sailed north² to Thrandheim that he lay weatherbound off the island which is called Dollz.³ On the island was a large cave which is called Dollzhellir. In the cave was great expectancy of treasure. The merchants made for it and went into the cave, and they had there the most difficult passage. They came to a place where a body of water extended across the cave, and no one dared to go across the water except Kali and another man, who was called Hávard, the serving man of Sölmund. They struck out across the water and they had a rope between them. Kali swam first, and had a blazing⁴ firebrand in his hand and a tinderbox between his shoulders. They swam across the water and came to land. There it was rocky,⁵ and there was a great stench. They could hardly light their torch. Then Kali said that they would not go any farther, and told them to build a cairn as a memorial. Then Kali spoke this verse:

¹ *Orkneyinga saga* udgivet for Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur ved Sigurdur Nordan. København, 1913-1916.

² *Flat.*: "west."

³ MS. 702: "Dollzey."

⁴ *Logannda* 'blazing' is omitted in *Flat.*

⁵ MS. 702: "Up above them was a stretch of rugged ground . . ."

Here have I raised a high
 cairn for hardy men
 on Dollz in the dark cave
 of the ghost. Thus I seek rings.
 I do not know who will set out
 on wave skis, will ever fare
 the long way and the ugly
 path across the broad water.

After that they turned back and came safely to their men. Then they left the cave.⁶ Nothing noteworthy is said to have happened on their voyage that summer.

The saga-writer seems to have had some difficulty in visualizing precisely the stage setting. The vague description of the cavern, which has been identified with Doll's Cave (Dollstenshulen) on the island of Sandø in the district of Søndmøre, is especially striking when compared with the careful depiction of a similar scene in chapter 95:

Jarl Harald had gone to a small island to hunt hares. Svein sailed toward Hellisey. This is an island with cliffs toward the sea. There is a large cave in the cliff, and the sea rises above the mouth of the cave at flood tide. . . . They came to the cave at ebb-tide. There they drew up their ship, for the cave sloped upward into the cliff. Then the sea rose above the mouth of the cave.

Not only is this a factual and graphic description of the cave on the island Eynhallow⁷ in the Orkneys, but each detail of natural scenery is essential for an understanding of the action. By contrast, the relevant fact that the mouth of Doll's Cave lies about two hundred feet above the sea and is therefore not easily accessible seems to have been unknown to the author.

It is quite obvious also that the writer or compiler of the *Orkneyinga saga* had little knowledge of what, if anything, actually happened in the cave. Probably his chief source of information and inspiration for this episode was the verse, the authenticity of which Finnur Jónsson accepts without ques-

⁶ First written *til hellinum* 'to the cave' and then corrected to *or hellinum* 'from the cave' by the scribe.

⁷ *Hellisey* is a scribal error for *Eyín Helga* 'Eynhallow,' which is the island actually described. Cf. J. Mooney, *Eynhallow: A Holy Island in the Orkneys* (Kirkwall, 1923), Ch. IV.

tion.⁸ Like most of the *lausavísur* composed by Rögnvald Kali, this verse is a jesting reference to one of his adventures.⁹ With such a stimulating poem to begin with, the saga-writer should have had little difficulty in constructing a reasonably satisfactory account of Kali's visit to Dollzey; for this account represents in its essential features a somewhat distorted but easily recognizable version of the robbery of a cave or burial mound guarded by a ghoulish corpse or some other monster. This is true both of the setting, however blurred it may be (an almost inaccessible cave in a cliff behind a waterfall or above a body of water), and of the various motifs (the faithful or treacherous servant, the rope, the stench, the difficulty in lighting the torch, and the use of the words *féðn* 'expectancy of treasure' and *draugr* 'tumulus dweller, revenant').

Would it be too far-fetched to surmise that Rögnvald in his poem facetiously intended to suggest such an heroic interpretation of an uneventful visit to Doll's Cave? One version of this *vísa* actually states that Kali raised a cairn to the ghost rather than in the cave of the ghost.¹⁰ From this fact one would have to infer that Kali, like Grettir and Beowulf, had overcome the monster in combat. But since the prose passage knows nothing of this deed, such an interpretation of the verse would merely add one more glaring contradiction to those already present. In any event, the Dollzhellir episode is another cogent evidence of the prevalence and popularity, in the Middle Ages, of a type of story familiar to all students of mediaeval literature through the well-known studies of Friedrich Panzer, W. W. Lawrence, R. W. Chambers, and Margaret Schlauch.

⁸ "Sagaernes Lausavísur," *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie*, III. Række, 2. Bind (1912), p. 53.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Cf. Nordal, *ed. cit.*, p. 143.

REVIEWS

Berulfsen, Bjarne. *Kulturtradisjon fra en storhetstid. En kulturhistorisk studie på grundlag av den private brevlitteratur av 14. hundreår*. Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, Oslo, 1948. Pp. 378.

There is never a lacuna in the history of a nation, though there may be in its literature: in the political and intellectual "Night of Four Hundred Years" which descended on Norway with the Kalmar Union there is still life—of a sort. Of its faint pulse-beat hardly anything but diplomatic records and a few letters bear witness during the next four centuries. Even there, fate was unkind to Norway in that the largest collection of such documents, a large parchment codex belonging to the Bergen cathedral and brought to the Copenhagen University Library after the Reformation, helped to feed the flames that in 1728 consumed both that library and Arne Magnusson's collections. If it had not been for the indefatigable copying zeal of the great collector himself, this source material would have been lost for all time. But through him, then, some 475 documents have come down to us. These consist chiefly of letters, and transcripts of letters, official and private, to and from Bishops Arne, Audfinn, and Hakon of Bergen. They date from the beginning of the fourteenth century to about its middle, and are accessible now in the first volumes of the *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*. We are almost entirely dependent on them for our knowledge of the internal condition of the land at that period and they are, alas, meager enough, for all Berulfsen's well-intentioned endeavor to create the impression of a modicum of intellectual life then prevailing. In fact, it would seem hazardous to draw conclusions, however guarded, from this correspondence of the higher clergy, on conditions in general.

After somewhat general chapters on the cultural milieu, and on the reading of the clergy (with the rather pitiful list of the books in Bishop Hakon's library), there follows an informative section on the composition of such clerical letters: they are seen to have throughout the conventional structure, even the details, down to identical phrases and formulas, of the medieval version of "the complete letter-writer," or, as such books might be called, the *Dictamina*. As to the general attitude of these letters,

it is as we might expect, pervasively theocentric, a fact which is faithfully reflected in idioms, style, and vocabulary. This leads to chapters specifically devoted to the purely linguistic aspects of the correspondence. There, the author undertakes the ungrateful and difficult apologetic task of showing how the foreign influences were to some extent at least *et opbyggende element*. It goes without saying that by "foreign influences" the Church and its Latin vehicle are meant, and only *longo intervallo* the German of the hated Hanseatic League, which had its main colony in Bergen. These foreign elements at least helped to bring, or rather to hold, Norway within the cultural orbit of the western nations.

Dealing as it does in detail with linguistic and stylistic phenomena, the book is hardly meant for laymen. Even so, the author might have striven for greater concessions to literary elegance. Even a non-Norwegian is offended on wellnigh every page by the excessive use of Latinisms such as *favorisere*, *differere*, *poenglere*, *furnere*, *kverulere*, *presisere*, *mitigerende tendens*, and *perseverative skrivefeil*, for all of which good native equivalents can be found—by the side of vulgarisms such as *gnikke ind på*, *i samme lei*, and *slå bena under nogen*, and the occasional affectation of landsmål, e.g., *vågalt*, *røynsle*, *beinveges*, *skriv* (for *skrivelse*), *bokheim* (for *litteratur*), *målbruk* (style), *ret* (riktig), *boka*, *døra*, used interchangeably with the *nynorsk* forms and words.

As not many libraries have the means to procure the very expensive set of the *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, I throw out the suggestion that a selection of the most telling and characteristic samples of the Norwegian of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries be published, somewhat along the lines of C. J. Brandt's *Gammel-Dansk Læsebog*, Vol. I, 1856, *Til Bogtrykkerkunstens Indførelse* (1480).

LEE M. HOLLANDER

The University of Texas

Tigerstedt, E. N. *Svensk litteraturhistoria*. Bokförlaget Natur och Kultur, Stockholm, 1948. Illustrated. Pp. 583. Paper covers. Price, 22 crowns; bound, 28 crowns.

According to a statement on the back cover of this timely

work, it is "en populär översikt av den svenska litteraturens historia från Rökstenen till Nils Ferlin." This does not signify, however, that the survey is "popular" in the common American sense of the term. It is, of course, an eminently professional enterprise by a young, brilliant, and already well-known Finnish-Swedish professor at the University of Helsingfors. "Populär" here means clear, readable, interesting, and—considering the amount of material involved—brief, although the single volume is large. Besides, its original, forceful style and richness of descriptive vocabulary of the critical and historical variety will add to its general popularity.

Professor Tigerstedt's new history is, necessarily, a highly concentrated outline of the main tendencies and principal writers in Swedish literature, extending from the period of runic inscriptions to about 1940, supplemented by 63 pages, in small type and closely printed, of bibliographical material down to 1948. In other words, it is thoroughly up-to-date, which is one of its chief values. And despite all exclusions and simplifications of the vast knowledge assembled, the outstanding characters and general movements in Swedish letters appear vividly, especially those that still are of importance for posterity. Many new facts and viewpoints which have emerged through more recent investigations are found in Tigerstedt's work, along with several provocative independent evaluations. In some cases a real deflation of traditional ideas or ideals has taken place, or they are more clearly set forth than has formerly been done. In fact, at least once the author's conclusion is brought to such a sharp focus that the force of the impact is almost shocking. He says (p. 82): "Ingen svensk man har varit en större kulturförstörare än Gustav Vasa." Really? Yet thought and sober judgment must admit that, in a specific sense, Tigerstedt is right. The famous liberator king was with good reason infinitely more interested in the practical development and stability of his kingdom than in non-material matters. As a result, after the Catholic culture had been suppressed and the possible influences of the Renaissance reduced to an ineffectual minimum, there was for a long time, except for the religious relations with Germany, nothing to take its place, and French and Italian literature did not become known in the North until a century later.

The compression of the text of *Svensk litteraturhistoria* to about five hundred pages has resulted in severe condensation of certain portions and complete excisions of others. There has been no space left for the *dii minores*. Linné's pupil, Pehr Kalm, who wrote such an important travelogue on America, is not mentioned, probably because he was more scientific than literary; the prolific, popular *Tendenz* novelist Maria Sophia Schwartz, several of whose works were in the seventies translated and published in the United States, has been eliminated; and no mention is made of the two volumes of poetry by Oscar Fredrik (King Oscar II), translator of Goethe's *Tasso* and author of *Ur svenska flottans minnen*. On the other hand—and this is now more important—the literature of the twentieth century, much of it proletarian and unknown in foreign lands, gets proportionately adequate attention.

Incidentally, condensation in the present volume has had its advantages. Pages ordinarily devoted in the larger literary histories to the more or less futile speculations about the allegedly ancient Swedish literature are left out, and the author, with his feet on *terra firma*, has been able to plunge at once into the medieval part that is definitely known. In general, Tigerstedt's sense of proportion and critical judgment seem sound, and it is difficult to see how modern students and teachers of Swedish literature can do without this book. It has, of course, the requisite index.

ADOLPH B. BENSON
Yale University

Wieselgren, Per. *Georg Stiernhielm, Natur och Kultur*, Stockholm. Pp. 100. Price, 3.50 crowns.

In today's complicated world the universal genius is as extinct as a pterosaur. Georg Stiernheim [alias Georg (Jöran) Olofsson, alias Georgius Olai, alias Georgius Olai Lilia], known to most of us "merely" as a poet, engaged in such an astonishing range of activities and disciplines that one is tempted to ask what this versatile man was *not* able to do or master. Certainly he was one of the most learned men Sweden has ever had. He set his stamp on the expansive era in which he lived. Professor Wieselgren

admits that the subject of his slender biography was proudly arrogant at times, opinionated, touchy, even treacherous, and that he did not realize the limitations which he, after all, had. On the credit side stand his linguistic talent, his virtues as artist, philosopher, legal authority, and engineer. He was always ready, however, to render his country still another service; his thirst for knowledge was unslakable; and his noble efforts to bring his talented gifts to greater and greater perfection are reminiscent of Goethe's. What a splendid light is thrown on Stiernhielm's personality by the four words he wanted on his headstone: *vixit, dum vixit, laetus!*

Stiernhielm lore and scholarship seem to be connected with the name Wieselgren. Oscar Wieselgren wrote the excellent article on Stiernhielm in *Nordisk Familjebok*. Now Per Wieselgren has produced this eminently readable little book—another of the many services rendered by *Natur och Kultur*—a book which obviously represents a heavy condensation of a vast amount of research. The author was for many years professor of Swedish language and literature at Tartu (Dorpat) University in Estonia. Since Stiernhielm spent more than a quarter of a century in the Baltic Provinces, our author had ample opportunity to delve into much material not available to scholars in Sweden. While the reviewer has discovered no startling changes in the main facts already known about Stiernhielm's life, so much of a more detailed and intimate nature has been added that the book is a revelation. (Unfortunately, the reviewer has not had access to Swartling's book on Stiernhielm, published in 1909.)

Because of the acquisition of an estate the family settled in the Estonian part of Livonia. While Stiernhielm himself returned to Stockholm in 1659 and finished his days there, his family gradually became Germanized as members of the German estate-owning class in the Baltic States. In time they even claimed that their progenitor was the son of a bishop in Riga rather than of the Bergslagen mine owner Olof Markvardsson!

The Baltic Provinces in those days were "rough." Not only was Stiernhielm the presiding judge at innumerable court suits carried on by the estate owners, but he also became involved in many suits of his own. It was a "processing" age, indeed. "Vid nästa ting, Jan Ersä. . . ." The enmity and the law suits between

the Stiernhielm family and the town of Dorpat were not definitely ended until 1779, five score and seven years after the grand-sire's death! Professor Wieselgren refers to the court archives as a "gold mine" for gathering knowledge about Stiernhielm and his years in the Baltic Provinces.

Hard drinking and rough-and-tumble fights seem to have been the rule whenever circumstances called for a celebration. At a christening in 1641 Stiernhielm nearly lost his life. He did sustain an injury to his right hand, which impaired its use for writing.

Although Professor Wieselgren confines himself largely to the biographical facts and the events surrounding Stiernhielm's life, the thumbnail descriptions and comments concerning the poet's works, however, are concise, informative, and enjoyable. Somewhat paradoxically in view of various brawls and altercations, Stiernhielm was a sincere advocate of peace, and Wieselgren's excerpts from and remarks on *Freds-Avl* strike a strangely responsive chord in the reader today:

Vyrdom den [Kristina] som slaget haver örlog ned;
prisom den oss avlat har hin ädle fred.

About ten years later Stiernhielm experienced war and violence directly and personally. The Russians—who do not seem to have changed much in three hundred years—invaded the Baltic States, forced Stiernhielm to flee and plundered and burned his estates. The refugees arrived in Stockholm stripped of all possessions, except what little they had carried along. Had it not been for this disaster, the *Hercules* might never have been printed. The poem appeared in 1658, fifteen years after its conception and ten years after it allegedly was finished. To the *Hercules* Professor Wieselgren devotes an important section of fifteen pages.

In many respects ahead of his times—as were da Vinci, Swedenborg, and other versatile geniuses—Stiernhielm busied himself, officially or privately, with many problems. He was, for instance, appointed director general (without salary!) for the country's weights and measures. Some improvements were brought about, but his efforts met with the resistance usually accorded innovations. Unfortunately, as Wieselgren points out, this resistance prevented Sweden from having a practical metric system with a logical interrelation between weights and meas-

ures more than two hundred years before she actually did adopt one. The Swedish foot established by Stiernhielm differed by 1/10,000 from that established by *Vetenskapsakademien* when the two were compared in 1854! He also advocated a silver currency, the "imperial dollar," that was to be valid and legal tender all over the world.

At a time when none of the scientific spadework in linguistics had been done, Stiernhielm was astonishingly clear-visioned about many phases in the origin and development of languages and peoples, which in his day had received traditionally-accepted explanations. He questioned the facile claim represented by the biblical story about the Tower of Babel as the prime cause for the "confusion of tongues." He refuted Cluverius' hypothesis that the Goths originated in Prussia. In his edition of Ulfila's Bible he opposed the tradition that the Bible in Hebrew was the basis of all linguistic research, pointing out that this language was subject to changes like any other.

In spite of economic straits and illness, Stiernhielm's old age was probably his happiest period. He had gained such devoted followers and assistants as Abraham Thorneus and Samuel Columbus; the latter left many characteristic anecdotes and sidelights on his former master in *Mådlroo eller Roo-Måål*. According to Columbus, Stiernhielm was somewhat of a practical joker, unpredictable in his humor. Within his means he kept a hospitably open house for his many visitors, quite a few of whom came for material, legal, or other assistance. He was happily engaged in multifarious tasks of his own choosing, but did not seem to mind that these same visitors prevented him from completing most of them. In 1672, at the age of seventy-three, Stiernhielm's long and useful life came to an end. Two years later the government finally saw fit to grant money (from what the Crown owed Stiernhielm) for a decent burial.

Wieselgren's compact book on Stiernhielm should do much to correct and expand the general reader's conception of the man and his life work. A convenient *curriculum vitae* and a two-page bibliography complete the volume.

NILS G. SAHLIN

American Swedish Institute

Nordisk kultur VII: Personnamn. Utgiven av Assar Janzén. Bonniers, Stockholm, 1947. Pp. 345. Price, 22 crowns (paper bound).

To the long list of surveys treating various aspects of northern cultural life, which have been published in the collection *Nordisk Kultur*, there has been added one devoted to Scandinavian personal names. The editor of the volume, Dr. Assar Janzén, who is also author of two-thirds of the contents, is professor of Scandinavian languages at the University of California at Berkeley.

This volume of 350 pages is one of the most extensive and important in the series. The personal names constitute, as the editor points out, one of the most valuable sources for a people's cultural history. They help us to draw significant conclusions about the elements of culture such as religion and ways of thinking, during periods about which we lack primary information. The material of personal names also reflects, through borrowed names, cultural influences during various epochs. Through commercial connections and Viking expeditions, for example, the Scandinavians came in contact with the people of both remote and neighboring regions, and this intermingling led to cultural influences that are reflected in the name-giving system. During the Middle Ages many foreigners came to the North and settled there. They brought with them foreign customs and foreign names. The Catholic Church tried to introduce Biblical and classical names to supplant the old pagan ones.

The material on Scandinavian names is, however, only partly collected and published. We are best informed on the Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian personal names and bynames, thanks to E. H. Lind's excellent name books.¹ Publication of the Danish personal names has recently been concluded by Gunnar Knudsen and Marius Kristensen, with the co-operation of Rikard Hornby;² these same scholars are now occupied with a dictionary of Danish bynames. The situation is less favorable

¹ *Norsk-isländska dopnamn och fingerade namn från medeltiden.* Uppsala, 1905-1915.; Supplement, Oslo, 1931; *Norsk-isländska personbinamn från medeltiden.* Uppsala, 1920-1921.

² *Danmarks gamle Personnavne I: Fornavne.* Copenhagen, 1936-1948.

with regard to the Swedish material, which is contained only in the incomplete and outdated work by M. Lundgren, E. Brate, and H. Lind.³ A Swedish dictionary of bynames does not as yet exist;⁴ a Swedish work treating personal names is, however, in preparation under the direction of Dr. Ivar Modéer at Uppsala.

For all the Scandinavian countries, however, we have lacked good and comprehensive surveys of the formation and origin of names; it is this lack which the present work has successfully attempted to remedy. The work consists of the following principal parts: "Översikt över de äldsta skandinaviska personnamnen, med huvudvikten på de urnordiska" by Prof. Ivar Lindquist, Lund; "De fornvästnordiska personnamnen" by Prof. Assar Janzén; "Fornavne i Danmark i middelalderen" by Cand. Mag. Rikard Hornby, Copenhagen; "De fornsvenska personnamnen" by Assar Janzén; and "Nordiska personbinamn under vikinga- och medeltid" by Dr. Sven Ekbo, Lund.

These surveys are all excellent in their respective fields, but I wish particularly to call attention to Prof. Janzén's article on the West-Scandinavian names, which has actually, as he hopes, become "en inkörspport för etymologiska undersökningar av fornnordiska personnamn överhuvud." The common personal names and their elements are here discussed in considerable detail, different meanings are conscientiously and critically listed, and many meritorious interpretations are presented. The author deserves special commendation for the detailed notes (41 pages with 620 references), which include the most important literature on the subject.

In connection with the approximately 4,000 names or elements of names which are treated in the book, there are certain details which invite discussion. The Old Icel. byname *Eitrkveisa* (p. 52) is assumed, for instance, to belong to those bynames which characterize persons "behäftade med en eller flera svulster." Instead, it undoubtedly belongs to the category of "Andliga egenskaper, uppförande o. dyl." Old Icel. *eitr* has the double meaning 'poison; bitterness, malice,' and the adjective *eitrfullr*

³ *Svenska personnamn från medeltiden*. Uppsala, 1892-1934.

⁴ A brief survey is Elof Hellquist's "Fornsvenska tillnamn" in *Xenia Lideniana*. Stockholm, 1912.

means 'hostile, malignant'; at least, Old Icel. *Eitrkveisa* ought to have been compared with Norw. *eiterkveisa*, Swed. *etterkvesa*, Norw. *eiterblaasa*, Swed. *etterbilla*, all of which are used for ill-tempered persons.

Further detailed comments must, however, be omitted in a short review, the purpose of which is to bring out the reviewer's main impression—that this work is one of the most important handbooks on the history of Scandinavian languages and culture which have appeared in recent years. It is indispensable for Germanic scholars.

GÖSTA FRANZEN

University of Chicago

Lynam, Edward, *The Carta Marina of Olaus Magnus*, Tall Tree Library, Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, 1949. Pp. vi+40. 10 plates. \$7.50.

Maps and travel books, especially old ones, have fascinated readers since they first began to be printed. As a result of this interest, most of the early ones are now scarce collectors' items. One of the rarest yet historically most significant old maps is the so-called *Carta Marina* of Olaus Magnus, first printed at Venice in 1539 and later, in modified form, at Rome in 1572. A unique copy of the first edition is in the Hof-und-Staats Bibliothek at Munich, and only seven copies of the second are known to be extant, two of which are in the United States. Thus, scholars of Scandinavian lore will welcome this newly published, limited edition of *The Carta Marina*, which despite its name and loxodromes is a superb pictorial land map.

In issuing this, their twelfth volume, the directors of the Tall Tree Library have combined the easy erudition of Dr. Edward Lynam, Superintendent of the Map Room in the British Museum and President of those connoisseurs of voyage literature, The Hakluyt Society, with the typographical artistry of Portland's Anthoensen Press.

In addition to splendid reproductions of the two original maps, the one a woodcut, the other a copper engraving, there are also a good many detailed reproductions of portions of Sweden, Iceland, Greenland, and Norway. The main attraction

for many contemporary readers, however, will be the drawings of those terrors of the vasty deep, the blood-chilling monsters which people believed in because their sailors swore they were to be met with on the high seas. A more delightful, entertaining assemblage of horrors than Olaus Magnus' would be hard to conceive of.

Aside from the illustrations, which in themselves are worth the price of the volume, there are six chapters of running commentary about the first great historian of Scandinavia, the sources of his map, detailed studies of its iconography, its later history and influence. A handful of misprints are the only flaws in this welcome reproduction of a work once widely known for its cartographical, historical, and artistic importance and still a delight to peruse.

MARSHALL W. S. SWAN

*American Swedish Historical Museum
Philadelphia*

Bondevik, Kjell: *Studiar i norsk segnhistorie*, Aschehoug, Oslo, 1948. Pp. 123.

This little book is an interesting and valuable study in the development of legend and the relation between legend and history.

The bulk of the volume is devoted to the famous Battle of Kringen fought in 1612. A band of Scottish mercenaries, hired by the king of Sweden for use in his war with Denmark-Norway, tried to march through Norway, but was intercepted at Kringen in Gudbrandsdal by the farmers of the vicinity and almost annihilated. The incident assumed an importance in Norwegian history quite out of proportion to its slight military significance. It gripped the imagination of the people and justly roused their pride and self-confidence. Naturally, as time went on, a wealth of story added drama and color to the original account of the event.

Dr. Bondevik has, as far as possible, extricated fact from fiction in this rich tradition. By citing the official report of the battle, sent to the government in Copenhagen shortly after the event, and by quoting later accounts, he shows that some of the elements of the story do not appear in literature before the

1830's and that the popular traditions on which these are based cannot be traced farther back than to the eighteenth century. Moreover, a careful study of the terrain shows that some of the incidents included in the more elaborate modern story could not have taken place.

Nevertheless, like most legends, those centering upon the Battle of Kringen have in them a modicum of historical fact drawn not only from the events of 1612, but also from happenings in other ages and other places. Thus the author has traced a certain element of the legends to historical incidents recorded in the Saga of King Sverre from the twelfth century. He has made a valuable contribution to the study of how legends travel far and wide and, conditions being favorable, become attached to new localities, acquiring color from the surroundings. Even in comparatively modern times, song and story have travelled along the old paths across the mountains where, in prehistoric times, men and women climbed with heavy burdens on their backs. Especially fascinating is the sketch of the age-old traffic across the mountains between Sogn and Gudbrandsdal, bringing with it close cultural contacts. Not least significant of the imports into the interior were legends such as those connected with the episode of 1612.

The last part of the book contains a critical analysis of a group of typical legends. Most of them have grown up in attempts to explain the origin of special dues owed by some farm or local community to some ecclesiastical institution. These legends are generally closely tied up with the idea, prevalent in the Middle Ages, that security from some threatening catastrophe could be bought with good deeds. Often the impending danger was a huge rock hanging as a menace above the farm. And safety—so say the stories—was assured through gifts to the church, which in the course of time have become fixed obligations.

KAREN LARSEN
St. Olaf College

Vedel, Valdemar. *Studier over Guldalderen i dansk Digting*, Gyldendalske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag, Copenhagen, 1948. Pp. 216+[1]. Price, 12.75 crowns.

The imprint "Anden Udgave" on the back of the title page is

misleading to the uninitiated, for Valdemar Vedel's *Studier over Guldalderen i dansk Digting* is a classic in the field of Danish literary history which originally was published over fifty years ago, in 1898. From such a work of proven value one can learn not only from content but also from form and method.

Vedel's book is *Geistesgeschichte* of the years 1800-1840, i.e., the Golden Age of Danish poetry, the age of Oehlenschläger and Grundtvig and those who followed them through the era of J. L. Heiberg. Individual poets and their works are considered, but for Vedel: "Det enkelte Menneske er i de store Træk kun Exemplar" (p. 97). He is primarily interested in origins and motivations, currents, traditions, and types.

In his first chapter, Vedel elucidates the problem and his methods, and, in defining the function of the ideal critic, he establishes a goal which he himself very nearly achieved:

... den smidige Aand, den universelle Sjæl, der kan trylle sig ind i de videst forskellige Sjælstilstande og hvis Fantasi alle Former af menneskelig Leven er lige nære og naturlige. Han har da den Alrune, der aabner hver Digtning's Sjæl, og kan nyde hver Form af poetisk Liv; og her er da et nyt Hverv: at sætte Læseren paa det rigtige Standpunkt . . . (p. 10).

The last sentence is left incomplete above, for its closing words show the author to be bound to his time and suggest the limitations of *Geistesgeschichte*: "... det, hvorfra Digtningen er bleven til, til hvis Trang den svarer og fra hvilket den altsaa kan nydes."

If Vedel was concerned with origins, i.e., "Tilblivelse," it was nevertheless in the broadest sense of the word, for he was the keenest analyst of his generation and foremost among the vanguard of modern critics. He cannot be severely criticized for being more empirical than a modern critic might desire; the psychological study of the depth and complexity of human motivations was as yet embryonic when he wrote.

It is well to bear in mind that the book, although closely knit, is comprised of a series of studies which can most effectively be read as entities. The first few paragraphs of each study contain the stimulating substance of Vedel's presentation; they are followed by an often tedious review of examples.

The book may be divided into two parts at page 97. The first comprises studies of literary currents, proceeding from the

"Oprindelige Aarer," which, in Vedel's opinion, are the comic, thought poetry, the lyric-epic song, and religiosity. The second part treats individual writers. The chapter on Oehlenschläger and the regrettably brief chapter on Grundtvig are especially commendable.

That most problematical of literary whipping boys, romanticism, is, in the last analysis, Vedel's subject. Writing in an age of realism, he concludes:

Heller ikke de egentlig romantiske Toner kan nogensinde miste Sangbund i Menneskene, fordi de tale til nogle af de væsentligste og værdifuldeste Sjælsider. Saalænge vi bagest i Gemyttet høre dunkle, kaldende Røster fra Naturlivet, dunkle tvingende Stemmer fra Fortiden . . . saa længe findes der ogsaa villigt Øre for Romantikens Længselstoner og gyldne Fantasier (p. 216).

P. M. MITCHELL
Harvard University

August Strindberg. *Från Fjärdingen till Blå Tornet*. Ett brev-urval 1870-1912 sammanställt av Torsten Eklund. Bonniers, Stockholm, 1946. Pp. 446. Price, 16 crowns (paper bound).

Of the great writers who have contributed to European literature during the last century, few if any were as prolific as August Strindberg. His collected works number fifty-five volumes; his letters, now being published, around six thousand! In a book edited by Torsten Eklund, *Från Fjärdingen till Blå Tornet*, we are given a sampling of letters running throughout the whole course of Strindberg's adult life. The first letter is written by the 21-year-old student at Uppsala; the last, by the 63-year-old man who had but three more weeks to live. All in all, Eklund has published about two hundred of the six thousand letters. Yet, even if they were all that were available to modern readers, they would still provide a rich complement for Strindberg's works in creative literature.

From the first letter to the last, one sees Strindberg in his strength and his weakness. He is tempestuous and turbulent, even aggressive in his struggles to express himself; he moves toward confusion and frustration. Stubborn, intransigent, he nevertheless drifts toward resignation. In the very ecstasy of love he attains the zenith of life's bliss and beauty, but in his

hate he also plummets to the depths of human pettiness. At times he appeals to us as wise, good, and tolerant; then, again, he seems foolish, mean, and biased. Often enough it is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; thus when he feels his own character sullied, he is quick to respond with denigration of others. Always he is on the alert to preserve his own independence; at all costs, he protects his ego from the vampirish assaults of others. He is so fearful of being spiritually devoured by friends, relatives, and competitors that his suspicion battens upon itself. Indeed, his misgivings, directed against his respective wives, make hate a complement of love; he is consumed by a corroding jealousy and a superlatively articulate necessity to save himself. As a consequence he is himself almost metamorphosed into a vampire. If there is any truth in the implication that he has to part from his wives to protect himself, it is no less true that they have equal cause to seek freedom from him. (See, for example, pp. 393-400.)

The letters show us clearly what kind of man we have in Strindberg. From early adulthood he is already endowed with a great capacity for effective work in a variety of fields; but he is also marked by an extreme sensitivity, for he reacts strongly even to the weakest stimuli. It was, of course, this capacity for work and this acute sensitivity that made it possible for him to create literature so strikingly different from that of his fellows. Yet the astounding activity and superior production brought him penalties rather than rewards. His compatriots were largely conventional and provincial Europeans prone to bridle with indignation at innovations and wholly disinclined to respond favorably to the performance of an unlicked literary cub. They were conditioned to a certain way of life, and they would accept Strindberg only if he would adapt himself to their way. They did not know—as, indeed, he himself did not know—that a rapprochement was beyond the realm of possibility. By and large the majority of Strindberg's contemporaries were quite incapable of appreciating his actual literary product even when they clearly recognized his artistic ability. For his part, Strindberg was too much the individualist to yield to the demands of his environment. We recognize this attitude in one of the earliest

letters, addressed to a former Uppsala classmate. Strindberg tells the latter that only the stupid, the selfish, the aggressive, and the rich prevail; moreover, he stalwartly declares that he has no intention of playing the fool for such creatures (p. 24). There were, in truth, two incommensurables: Strindberg on the one hand; the nineteenth-century Swedish environment on the other.

Because this incommensurability could not be resolved, Strindberg became the victim of repeated frustrations. When he was but twenty-three years old, he wrote his first great work, *Master Olof*. This was in 1872, and it took ten years of effort to get a version of the drama produced. Such neglect occasioned deep wounds (pp. 91, 316, *et al.*), and there seems little reason to doubt that this first major frustration was responsible for much of the mental turmoil that developed later. The difficulties with *Master Olof* were later matched by similar experiences with other works. Strindberg was always struggling for acknowledgment of the literary position that was so obviously his, but adequate recognition was not forthcoming. He was made to feel like a pariah who could never be admitted to the sacrosanct precincts of Swedish men of letters.

As in his works, so in his letters there is a distinct break in the nineties. The Strindberg after the Inferno crisis is a very close relative of the Strindberg before the crisis, but his attitude toward the supernatural has at long last been altered. In a letter to Leo Littmansson, written in 1899, Strindberg calls attention to his play *There are Crimes and Crimes*, in which, he says, *Den Osynlige (Gud)* is the hero (p. 319), indeed, the very *deus ex machina*. But the supernatural, as conceived during the last years of Strindberg's life, is no mere dramatic device; it is an omnipotent something that humbles the proud and terrifies even the temerarious. While Strindberg suspects that he is childishly superstitious (p. 286), he cannot escape the awful presence of the supernatural powers that intervene directly in the lives of men (p. 304). They seem to chastise more often than they bless; thus they must be propitiated. Strindberg at times goes so far as to suggest that some of the offensive lines in his earlier plays be eliminated (p. 410). This does not mean that he is ever wholly resigned, obedient to the Powers, and piously responding to all

the directions of the Unseen One. Actually he cannot make himself submit to any institutionalized form of religion (p. 319). Moreover, he senses that life is always in an imbalance of good and evil. For two minutes of joy one pays thirty days of torture (p. 359), and taken by and large this is truly a dog's life (p. 392). Now and then, however, he briefly recovers hope—in his third marriage, and then again when he begins to think of Fanny Falkner as a possible mate. And there are occasions too when he develops a longing for Montparnasse, for the Bohemian existence that may rejuvenate him (p. 359).

Strindberg's is a life of merging dreams and actualities, a merging that becomes more or less deliberate (p. 347). Even as early as 1884 he writes a poem with the strange title *Sömngångarnätter på vakna dagar* (p. 83), and his life is already taking on the characteristics of the sleepwalker wandering about the world in the light of day. A few years later, after he has written *The Father*, he tells Axel Lundegård that he scarcely knows whether the drama is a work of creative art or a representation of his own life (p. 157). The older he becomes, the more he finds life becoming more dreamlike and less understandable (p. 338). At the same time he knows that his own life takes on the characteristics of drama (p. 379) because he himself has composed the Strindbergian selves (p. 347). All the world is a stage for him. Unfortunately there are consequences not listed by Shakespeare in *As You Like It*, and the biosocial creature August Strindberg pays the penalties not only for himself but also for his literary alter egos.

Until all the available Strindberg letters are printed, we shall probably not know whether Torsten Eklund has made the wisest possible choice in his selection of the letters he has brought together in the present volume. Yet, even from this coign of admittedly dubious vantage we should feel grateful that such a book has been published. To those who have not read much of Strindberg, the volume offers a splendid introduction to the artist's life and works; to those who have read much, it will provide a welcome supplement to the works and letters already published. We may conclude with the statement that Eklund's notes, prefixed to individual letters or groups, make the book

still more readable and valuable, for the notes are both interpretive and expiatory.

CARL E. W. L. DAHLSTRÖM

Portland, Oregon

Koht, Halvdan. *The American Spirit in Europe: A Survey of Transatlantic Influences*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1949. Pp. x+289. \$3.75.

This is the first volume sponsored by the American Institute of the University of Oslo, and it is issued in co-operation with the Department of American Civilization of the University of Pennsylvania. Thus it is another welcome symbol of our new international era.

Here, it seems to me, is a book which every educated American will want to read and ponder, especially its eleventh chapter, "The Almighty Dollar versus American Idealism." I say this not merely because it is the mature work of an eminent Scandinavian statesman and scholar but chiefly because anyone who reads it will be enlightened by a deeper and more comprehensive realization of the common historical origins and constantly interlocked experiences of Europe and America, and will be strengthened in the belief that henceforth there can be increasing understanding of one another and successful co-operation in the improvement of Western Civilization. The book is not crammed with details but consists of rapid historical surveys and broad and timely generalizations. Any specialist in politics, economics, or literary history could easily ferret out factual errors or omissions in it, or dispute some of its opinions on matters of secondary importance; but such specialists would not, and probably could not, compose a book as generally enlightening and helpful as Halvdan Koht's. Perhaps, now that the Masaryks are dead, none but a Scandinavian statesman could have written it.

Halvdan Koht was a professor of history at the University of Oslo for thirty-four years, recognized nationally and internationally as Norway's leader in that field; and he was Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs when, on April 9, 1940, the Nazis brazenly told him that they were invading his country, where-

upon he went with his king and the government into exile, and in foreign lands, especially in the United States, labored for the liberation of his people. He writes as one who knows his own times from bitter personal experiences of its most brutal and shameful manifestations. Yet there is in his book no trace of hatred, prejudice, or discouragement; it is governed by a statesman's wide interests and concerns about human welfare and by a scholar's judiciousness and candor.

Most of the recent books about international relationships, past and future, are dull and feeble because they are narrow. Their writers see nothing important in such relationships except political and economic history and problems. They pay no attention to the human feelings and aspirations out of which the most difficult of these problems arise, and which express themselves in the literature and art of the different peoples; because these politico-economists are, as a rule, ignorant of literature and art, and unaware of their great significance as indicators of humanity's mind and intent. Dr. Koht, being a man of genuine culture, does not suppose, as the Philistine specialist does, that one can intelligently discuss the interrelationship of peoples without considering the creative imagination and its works. He deals of course very largely with political and economic history, but the amount of space which he gives to social, literary, and artistic matters is substantial, for he perceives that peoples through them (e.g., through motion pictures), quite as much as through political events, get their impressions of one another's national character.

His main theme is the impact of America upon European thoughts, feelings, and events. What was it in American life that, from colonial times to modern, strongly aroused the interest of Europe, and markedly influenced its political history, its economic conditions and technological methods, its standards of living, and its spiritual, literary, and artistic developments? What has aroused European admiration and imitation; what, dislike and fear? To most Americans Dr. Koht's encyclopedic array of answers to those questions will be astounding in their significance and variety, and not in all instances flattering to American complacency. He shows that for more than a century

and a half America has been far more influential upon Europe than most Americans suppose it to have been, both in practical matters and in attitudes of mind and imagination. Helter-skelter there have poured into the European stream of consciousness innumerable American phenomena—some of them good, some evil, and many of them seemingly unrelated to the others, but each unmistakeably stamped “Made in the U.S.A.”—America’s championship of free democracy and the right of revolution; its technological triumphs with steamboats, the telegraph and telephone, reapers and sewing-machines, Edison’s electric wonders, and (characteristically) more deadly firearms on the one hand, and anaesthesia on the other; the sordid failures of democratic self-government, and the victory of democracy and emancipation in the Civil War; the stupendous economic prosperity, based on standardization that stifled individualism; the imperialism that grabbed points of vantage in the Pacific and in Central America, and the magnanimous internationalism later shown toward China, Cuba, and the Philippines; the American spirit in the Essays of Emerson and the Gettysburg Address, and the silly misrepresentation of American life by the commercialized motion pictures of Hollywood. There is neither sarcasm nor flattery. Our history is revealed in its paradoxical contrasts—the noble idealisms and gigantic achievements on the one hand; and the base impulses and sham-successes on the other. Andrew Carnegie’s *Triumphant Democracy*, an unconscious disclosure of himself and his fellow-Philistines, is mentioned, in which he boasted that “The old nations of the world creep on at a snail’s pace; the Republic thunders past with the rush of the express.” Carnegie dwelt upon the superiority of the United States in wealth, agriculture, manufactures, the application of science for social and industrial purposes, in short, the stupendous material progress of the nation. But what he supposed to be its “literature” was its newspapers, and what interested him about them was their mass-production. This kind of naïveté and Philistinism aided those European critics who wanted to think of America as the vital proof of their dogma that democracy and liberty fostered ignorance and vulgarity. Matthew Arnold, who inclined in the same derogatory direction, would have been

shocked to find himself in the same galley with Andrew Carnegie and also, if he had lived to our day, with Knut Hamsun, in that European group which ignorantly believed that America had "no intellectual life."

Dr. Koht gives also the other side of the story. He reminds us that America has been to Europeans not only a land of economic opportunities and a pattern for political constitutions, but also a source of idealistic inspiration. Henrik Ibsen (like Emerson) disliked the American industrialization of life; but in his *Pillars of Society* it is a character who had breathed the free air of the United States whom Ibsen selected to utter the key-words: "*The spirit of truth and liberty*, these are the real pillars of society." Likewise, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, after his visit to the Scandinavian settlers in the United States, expressed his belief, "their life in America made them *more vivid and independent*." America gave religious and intellectual inspiration to Europe through William Ellery Channing, Theodore Parker, and many other prophets; but especially through Ralph Waldo Emerson, who "awakened the conscience of man, especially of youth" with his immortal counsel, "Be true to thyself." Perhaps the most surprising fact in Dr. Koht's work is that some of the social reform movements which parochial American congressmen are denouncing as "crazy European notions" were started by that one-hundred-per-cent American, Henry George, with his *Progress and Poverty* (Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, in a less sweeping way, did its bit also). There are many other surprises in store for the reader of this book. But the American who, in Dr. Koht's percipient vision, exercised the greatest influence of all—an influence greater than that of Irving, Cooper, Longfellow, Prescott, Henry James, and of all the others—was Walt Whitman.

Embodying in himself the largest and highest aspiration of America, Walt Whitman struck up for a New World. Truly he gave the sign of democracy, and what was the sign? *By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms.* He spoke the voices of prisoners and slaves, of all the oppressed generations and beings. It was the American program of the equal freedom of all men transformed into the triumphal hymn of infinite expansion. And it was the ideal of universal fraternity, the noble comradeship of men and nations. He was America's greatest message to the world.

The prophetic message of an American poet—that, as Dr. Koht sees it, has meant more to Europe than any single other American influence—more than the ingenious devices of Franklin, Morse, Singer, and Edison; more even than the political advances inaugurated by Jefferson, Wilson, and F. D. Roosevelt—this message from a poet's heart and imagination exalting the American ideals of freedom and of equality of opportunity, and thus reinspiring that Old World from which America originally drew the sources of its life and of its faith.

The account of the influence of present-day American literature on Europe is very brief (Faulkner, Dos Passos, and Steinbeck are not even mentioned); and I suggest that the reader supplement it with Henri Peyre's "American Literature Through French Eyes," *Virginia Quarterly* (Summer, 1947), and Eric Bentley's "A Note on American Culture," *The American Scholar* (Spring, 1949).

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AXEL LOUIS ELMQUIST

In Memoriam

AXEL LOUIS ELMQUIST was born in Parker's Prairie, Minnesota, February 3, 1884. He was graduated from the Academy of Northwestern University, Evanston, in 1901, and received his A.B. degree at Northwestern University in 1904. The following year he secured his M.A. degree there also. Subsequently he pursued studies in philology and linguistics at various times at the Universities of Leipzig, Germany; Uppsala, Sweden; and Copenhagen, Denmark.

He became an instructor in Greek and Latin at Northwestern University in 1906 and served in that capacity for three years. Continuing at Northwestern, he was an instructor in the Scandinavian languages from 1909 to 1911; Assistant Professor of Scandinavian Languages from 1911 to 1915; and Assistant Professor of Germanic Languages from 1915 to 1920.

After the First World War, Mr. Elmquist put aside his academic work for a time and engaged in a business enterprise. His main interest in life, however, was in the field of scholarly pursuits, and in 1936 he returned to the teaching profession and became an instructor in Germanic languages at the University of Nebraska. From 1940 up to his retirement this year, he was an associate professor in Germanics at that university.

Mr. Elmquist had become a member of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study in the very first years of its existence, and he served for many years as one of its leaders and a most ardent promoter. He was Associate Editor of *Scandinavian Studies and Notes*, the publication of the Society, from 1915 to 1919, and again from 1938 up to this year.

He was the author of two college textbooks for the study of the Swedish language: *An Elementary Swedish Grammar* (1914) and *Swedish Phonology* (1915), and the editor of a number of books of Swedish readings for American college classes, with introductions, vocabularies, and explanatory notes. These books are: Selma Lagerlöf's *En Herrgårdssågen* (1910); Helena

Nyblom's *Det Ringer* (1910); Selections from Selma Lagerlöf's *Nils Holgersson* (1912); Runeberg's *Fänrik Ståls Sägner* (1915; revised edition, 1936) and *Swedish Reader* (1917). He also contributed numerous scholarly articles to philological journals both in this country and in Sweden.

On June 15, 1907, Mr. Elmquist married Minna Louise Harder. She died five years ago. At the Swedish Covenant Hospital in Chicago, Mr. Elmquist died, October 29, 1949, at the age of 65 years and 8 months. He leaves to mourn his departure a son, Karl Erik, who resides in Texas, his sister, Mrs. Alma Marquardt, and his brother Martin in Chicago, and his brother Paul in Tucson, Arizona.

Other relatives and a large circle of friends, especially among his professional colleagues and among his former students, are also saddened by his passing. His memory will long remain with those who knew him.

E. GUSTAV JOHNSON

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN PROGRAM IN SCANDINAVIAN AREA STUDIES

A new program of Scandinavian Area Studies has been initiated this year at the University of Wisconsin, according to announcement by Professor Einar Haugen, chairman of the Department of Scandinavian Languages. The previous offering of literary and linguistic courses has now been supplemented by a group of courses in social studies. Two new staff members have been added, Mr. Sverre Kjeldstadli of Oslo, historian and author of such studies as *Rjukan, et Moderne Eventyr om Industri og Bondesamfunn* (Oslo, 1943); and Mr. Jørgen Dich of Copenhagen, economist and adviser to the Ministry of Social Affairs as well as the editor of *Socialt Tidskrift*, the leading Danish journal in the field of social problems. Courses are open to undergraduates as well as graduates, and it will be possible to secure a master's degree in Scandinavian Area Studies, as well as a minor for the Ph.D. in related fields. The new courses offered this year are:

Scandinavian 101. SCANDINAVIAN LIFE AND CIVILIZATION. Yr; 2 cr. Mr. Haugen and staff.

Comparative Literature 170. SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS. Yr; 3 cr. Mr. Haugen.

Comparative Literature 131. IBSEN AND STRINDBERG. II; 2 cr. Mr. Haugen.

Economics 187. RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN SCANDINAVIA. Yr; 3 cr. Mr. Dich.

History 187. HISTORY OF THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES. Yr; 3 cr. Mr. Kjeldstadli.

Political Science 187a. GOVERNMENTS OF SCANDINAVIA. I; 3 cr. Mr. Kjeldstadli.

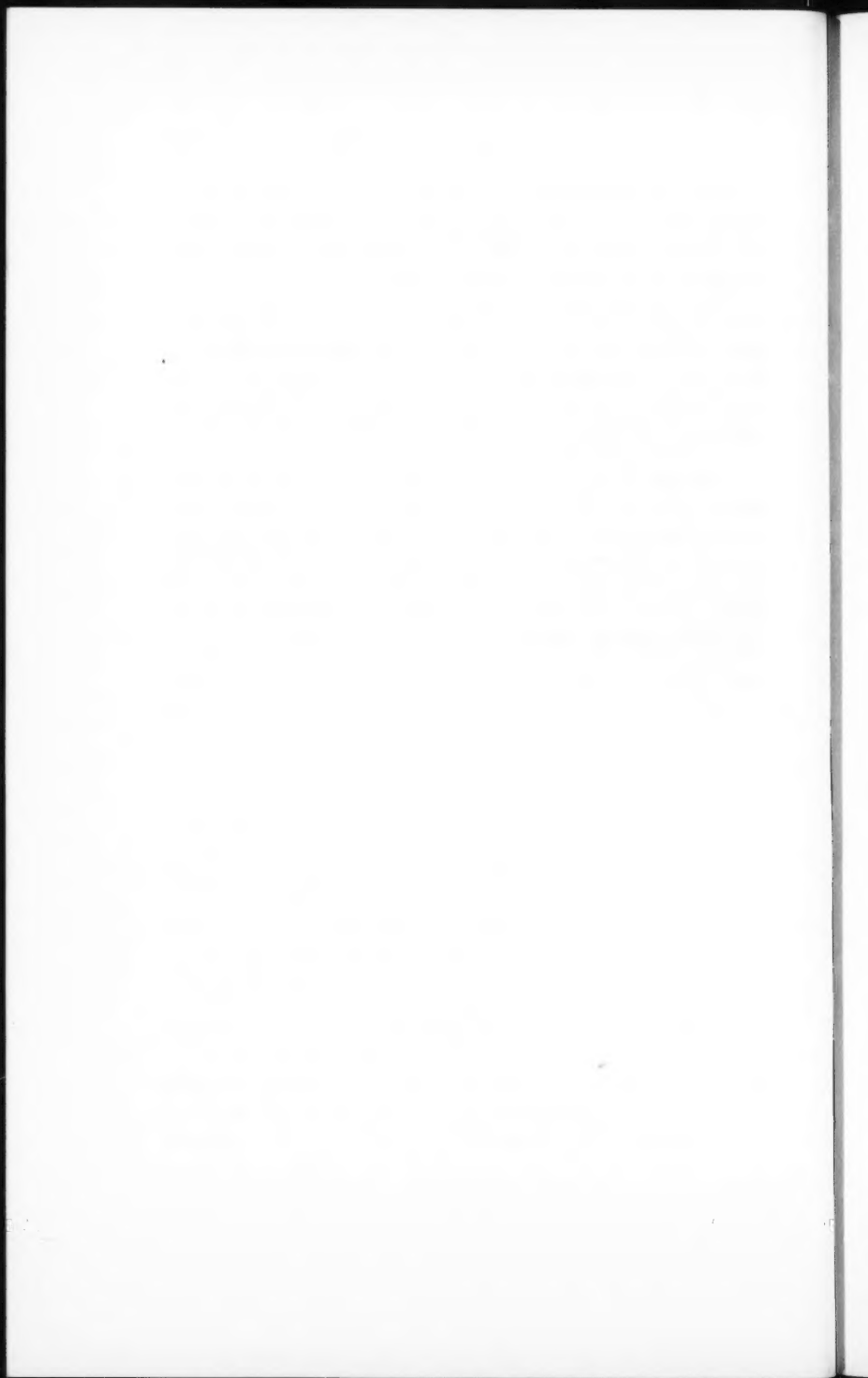
Political Science 187b. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF SCANDINAVIA. II; 3 cr. Mr. Kjeldstadli.

Sociology 187. SOCIAL TRENDS IN SCANDINAVIA. Yr; 3 cr. Mr. Dich.

Older courses include a full schedule of Norwegian language instruction, in part conducted by Mr. John Aagesen of Oslo. Mr. Haugen also offers courses in Old Norse and in History and Structure of the Scandinavian Languages.

The program, which is supported in part by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, offers two graduate fellowships at \$900 each and two undergraduate fellowships at \$500 each to qualified students. Applications must be in the hands of the Committee on Scandinavian Area Studies at the University of Wisconsin by March 15, 1950; awards will be announced by April 1.

Plans are now being drawn up for a joint summer-school session with the University of Minnesota Scandinavian Area Program to be held this summer at Madison and the following summer at Minneapolis. Faculty resources will be pooled, and it is planned to hold a special Institute in connection with the session to which teachers of Scandinavian throughout the country will be invited. Details will be announced later.



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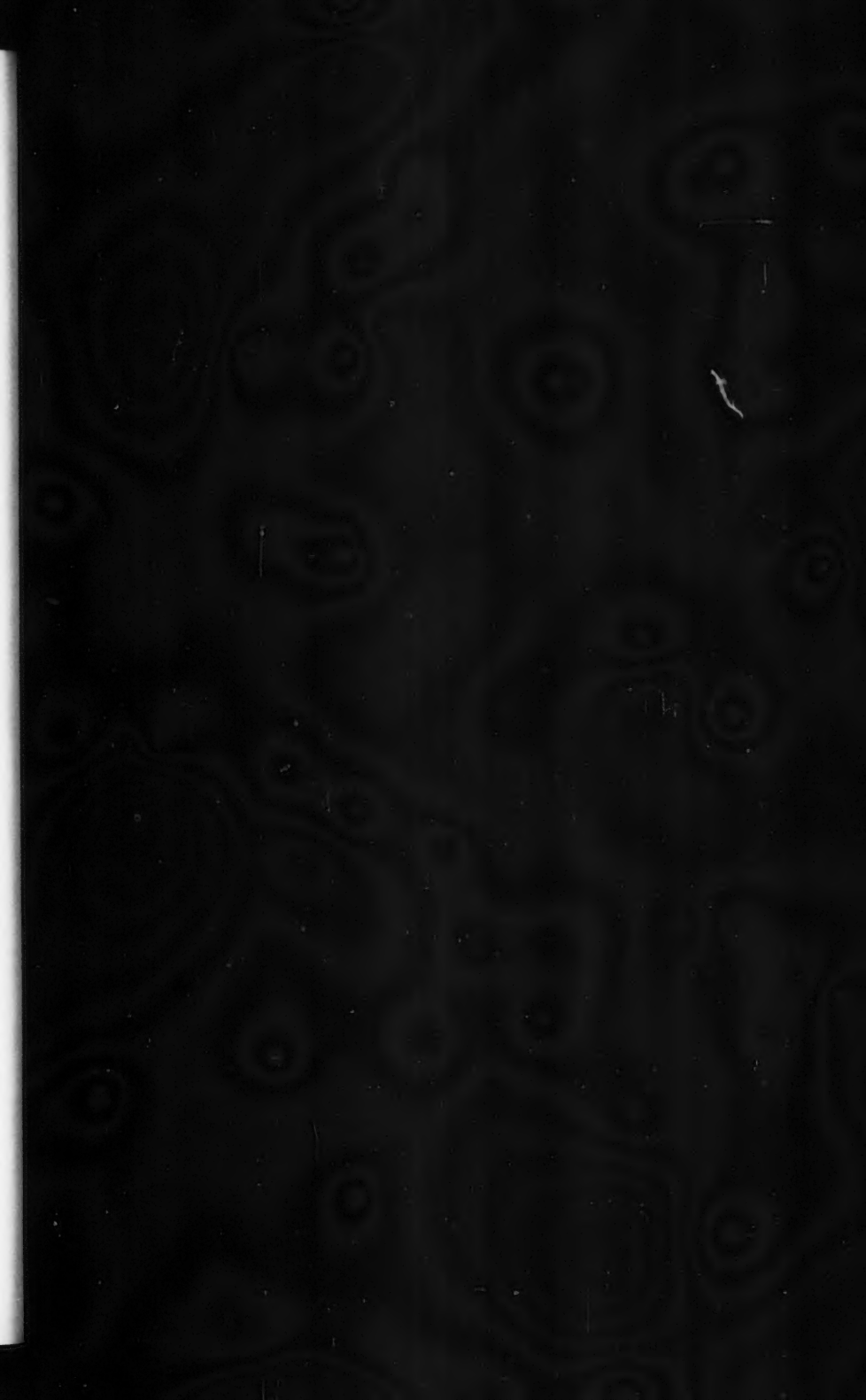
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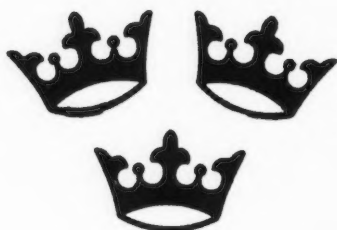
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